

The new species, which is tolerably common in Kashmir, is named after the discoverer, Major John Biddulph, whose services to ornithological science are well known.

XLIV.—*Notes on a 'Catalogue of the Accipitres in the British Museum' by R. Bowdler Sharpe (1874). By J. H. GURNEY.*

[Continued from p. 341.]

MY late friend Mr. G. R. Gray, in his 'Hand-list of Birds,' included in his "subfamily Milvinæ"* the genera *Machæramphus*, *Pernis*, *Henicopernis*, *Regerhinus*, *Cymindis* (or, more properly, *Leptodon*), *Aviceda*, and *Baza*; but Professor Schlegel, in his 'Muséum des Pays-Bas,' associates the birds comprised in these genera in a distinct group under the name of "Pernes," in which he is followed by Mr. Ridgway†, who, however, includes amongst the Pernes the genus *Elanoides*, ranked by Professor Schlegel amongst his "Milvi." My view on this point accords with that of Professor Schlegel; and I have therefore to differ from that adopted by Mr. Sharpe, who does not admit either the Milvinæ or the Perninæ as distinct subfamilies, but merges in his "subfamily Aquilinæ" all the above-named genera, except *Aviceda* and *Baza*, which he unites under the latter name, and includes in his "subfamily Falconinæ."

The circumstance of Mr. Sharpe having placed the genus *Leptodon* in one subfamily, and *Aviceda* in another, whilst Mr. Ridgway (*l. c.*), speaking of *Leptodon*, says, "this subgenus is so very similar to *Aviceda*, that there is considerable doubt as to the propriety of separating the two" (*i. e.* even generically), seems to me to be a notable instance of the different views sometimes taken of the same facts by the most competent naturalists, especially in the matter of scientific arrangement.

All the Pernine genera consist of birds with relatively short

* *Vide* 'Hand-list of Birds,' vol. i. p. 24.

† *Vide* 'Studies of American Falconidæ,' p. 152.

tarsi, except *Machærhamphus*, in which the tarsus is proportionally longer, as it is also in *Rostrhamus* amongst the Milvinae, a similarity which induces me to consider *Machærhamphus* in immediate succession to *Rostrhamus**, notwithstanding the great difference in the form of the bill. This form in each case is unique, but affords a strong contrast between the extremely elongated upper mandible of *Rostrhamus* and the remarkably contracted one of *Machærhamphus*, in which genus the bill is smaller in proportion than in any other Raptorial bird, though this peculiarity is combined with a gape proportionally larger than that of any other of the Raptores.

The outline of the bill and the very wide gape in both species of *Machærhamphus* may well remind the observer of the corresponding parts in the Caprimulagine genus *Nyctibius*†, as has already been noted by Mr. Hume in his article on *M. alcinus* in 'Stray Feathers,' vol. iii. pp. 269–271.

MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier, who give an excellent account of *M. anderssoni*, and especially of its osteology, with illustrations, in their work on the Birds of Madagascar, pp. 77–83, refer to this similarity, remarking, in speaking of that species, "il offre certaines particularités qui le rapprochent des représentants de la famille des Engoulevents;" and again, "son crâne ressemble à beaucoup d'égards, à celui d'un *Caprimulgus*."

The principal characteristics of the genus *Machærhamphus* are detailed in the two articles above referred to; but in neither of them is reference made to two peculiarities which

* MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier remark, with reference to the natural position of the genus *Machærhamphus*, "C'est entre les représentants de la famille des Bondrées et ceux de la famille des Milans que doit se placer le *Machærhamphus*" (*vide* Ois. de Madagascar, vol. i. p. 79).

† It has sometimes occurred to me that the strange circumstance of Le Vaillant having figured and described *Nyctibius forficatus* (*vide* Ois. d'Afr. pl. 47) as a species of which he captured a pair in a hollow mimosa in Great Namaqua Land may possibly have arisen from his having so obtained a pair of *Machærhamphus anderssoni*, and when his collection was lost by shipwreck, having figured, as a substitute, a skin of the *Nyctibius*, as bearing some resemblance to the birds of which he had been thus deprived.

seem to me to be worthy of notice; the first of these is the unusual relative length of the feathers composing the under tail-coverts, the upper coverts being also long, but less remarkably so than the lower.

In illustration of this remark I may quote the following measurements, for which I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Seebohm, who lately noted them for my use from specimens in the British Museum:—

	Tail.	Length of upper coverts.	Length of lower coverts.
	in.	in.	in.
<i>M. alcinus</i> from Malacca	7·	3·10	4·80
Ditto from New Guinea	7·30	2·90	4·15
<i>M. anderssoni</i> from Madagascar	7·20	3·50	4·20
I may add the following measurements, taken by myself from an adult <i>M. anderssoni</i> from Madagascar in the possession of Professor Newton*			
		3·70	4·50

The second peculiarity which I am desirous of noticing is, that the interdigital membrane between the middle and outer toe, which exists in many birds of prey, is developed to an unusual extent in the genus *Machærhamphus*, reaching to the first joint of the outer, and beyond the first joint of the middle toe, and filling up almost the entire space between these two points.

The two species of *Machærhamphus*, *M. alcinus* and *M. anderssoni*, diverge but slightly from each other; but, in addition to the circumstance of the dimensions of the former being usually larger† than those of the latter, they appear con-

* The type specimen of *M. anderssoni*, in the Norwich Museum, appears to have these feathers equally long; but the bird being cased up, I cannot conveniently measure them.

† The only exception to this, so far as I am aware, is in the case of a pair of *M. alcinus* from the Laloki river, New Guinea, of which the measurements are given by Mr. Ramsay in the 'Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales,' p. 247; this pair appear to be smaller than any other specimens recorded, and, strange to say, the supposed female is smaller than the male. The measurements of a larger New-Guinea specimen, and also of one from Malacca, are given by Mr. Sharpe in the 'Journal of the Linnean Society (Zoology),' vol. xiii. p. 309; but in both these specimens the sex is unrecorded. Detailed measurements of

stantly to differ in the two following points:—the peculiar carinated ridge on the upper mandible is more sharply defined by a channel on either side in *M. alcinus* than in *M. anderssoni*, and the transverse bars on the wings and tail appear to be always present in *M. anderssoni* but absent in *M. alcinus*.

It should also be mentioned that all the specimens of *M. alcinus* which have been described (except the three from New Guinea, to which I have alluded in a preceding footnote) have exhibited an elongated occipital crest, whilst in *M. anderssoni* the crest is so short and rudimentary that it hardly deserves the name, though most of the occipital feathers are pointed and slightly prolonged, and in some individuals the prolongation is rather greater than in others*.

At the time of the publication of Mr. Sharpe's volume, *Machærhamphus alcinus* was only known as a native of the Malay peninsula: since then, Mr. Hume, in the article to which I have already referred, has recorded its occurrence in a rather more northern locality, Malewoon, at the southern extremity of the Tenasserim Province, and in the opposite direction its range has been ascertained to extend as far south as New Guinea; and I have already referred to the three specimens which have been there obtained, and to the singular fact of their being all crestless, a circumstance which may perhaps indicate that they belong to a distinct local race.

I am glad to be able to add to these recorded localities the intermediate one of the island of Borneo, having recently examined a fully crested specimen obtained in that island by

a male, taken from the flesh, are given by Mr. Hume in the article to which I have already referred; and similar measurements of both sexes of *M. anderssoni*, also taken from the flesh, will be found in Andersson's 'Birds of Damara Land,' p. 24. The above-mentioned measurements may also be compared with those of both species given by Mr. Sharpe in his Catalogue, and with those of the female of *M. anderssoni* recorded by MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier (*l. c.*).

* In the article on these two species in Mr. Sharpe's Catalogue, the words at p. 343, "head very much crested," appear to have been accidentally inserted in the description of *M. anderssoni* instead of in that of *M. alcinus*.

a gentleman who consigned it to the care of Mr. Burton, the bird-preserver, of Wardour Street, to whom I am indebted for the opportunity of inspecting it.

M. anderssoni, originally obtained by the late Mr. Andersson in Damara Land, has, since then, been found in Madagascar, but not, so far as I am aware, in any intervening locality between these, its western and eastern limits.

Three of the specimens obtained in Madagascar are remarkable for the fuliginous colouring of the under surface; two of these are preserved in the Paris Museum, and have been described, and one of them figured, by MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier in their 'Hist. Nat. des Oiseaux de Madagascar,' pl. 25; both these specimens are there said to be females, and one of them to have been killed on the nest, of which, however, no particulars are given.

The third fuliginous specimen is in the possession of Professor Newton, to whose kindness I am indebted for an opportunity of examining it; its sex has not been recorded, but its dimensions, of which I took the following notes, lead me to believe that it is also a female:—

	inches.
Culmen (exclusive of cere)	·80
Wing	14·0
Tarsus	2·40
Middle toe	1·80

My examination of this example has led me to agree with the opinion expressed by Mr. Sharpe in 'The Ibis' for 1875, p. 254, that the type specimen figured in the 'Transactions of the Zoological Society,' vol. vi. p. 29, and others resembling it, are immature, and that the fuliginous phase is, in fact (as has also been asserted by MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier, *l. c.*), the adult dress of this species.

The following memoranda were noted by me as to the plumage of Professor Newton's fuliginous specimen:—

This bird, which was obtained in the month of June, had nearly completed a moult; the new feathers on the upper surface are blackish brown, appearing black in some lights, especially on the crown of the head, and are darker than the

remaining old feathers, which are a dark chocolate-brown; the feathers of the hinder head, nape, and sides of neck have pure white bases, which occupy so large a portion of the feather as to be only partially concealed, and therefore more conspicuous than the white bases of other portions of the plumage*; the sides of the head are entirely blackish brown, except a white line above and below the eye; many old feathers on the right side of the throat and breast have white edgings, and there is a slight admixture of white in the coloration of the lower abdomen; but, with these exceptions, the entire under surface is blackish brown, the new feathers being everywhere darker than the old; the tail, which is unmoulted, is dark chocolate-brown, crossed with indistinct bars of a paler brown; five whitish spots or imperfect bars are to be found on the inner web of the external rectrices, and similar white bars are observable on the outer webs of the exterior feathers of the upper tail-coverts.

I propose now to notice the genus *Henicopernis*, consisting of a single species inhabiting New Guinea and also occurring in some of the adjacent islands. This species is nearly allied to the genus *Pernis* (which I intend to consider in my next paper), but is generically separable from it in having the foot, and especially the outer toe, considerably smaller in proportion, and also on account of the greater development of the tail and of the more elongated character of the feathers which clothe the sides of the head.

Two localities for this bird may be added to those mentioned by Mr. Sharpe, viz. the island of Misori, as recorded in Salvadori's 'Prodromus,' p. 4, and the New-Britain group of islands, whence a specimen was recently sent by the Rev. G. Brown, which, by the kindness of Dr. Slater, I have had the opportunity of examining. It is apparently in immature dress; and as this stage is not described in Mr. Sharpe's

* MM. Milne-Edwards and Grandidier, in describing the two fuliginous examples at Paris, give the following particulars:—"leurs parties supérieures sont d'un brun roussâtre foncé, toutes les plumes ayant leur base blanche; la nuque est coupée par un collier blanc" (*vide op. cit.* p. 77 and plate 24).

volume, I have noted the following particulars of its plumage:—The crown and sides of the head and the entire mantle are of a uniform dark purplish brown, with the following exceptions: some feathers on the crown of the head have a white spot on both webs, the feathers of the nape have blackish-brown tips, darker than the circumjacent plumage, a conspicuous band of pale brown crosses the folded wing, extending to all the feathers except the hindmost tertial, but on the inner webs of the wing-feathers the bar is white, instead of pale brown, and these two colours are separated by a dark brown centre or shaft-mark, except on the primaries; these last have a second bar of light brown nearer the tip, and extending across both webs; the tail has three cross bars of dark brown, the lowest subterminal and succeeded by very slight traces of a pale tip; between these dark bars there are three intervening bands of pale brown; all the feathers of the under surface are dark brown, with paler edgings, but on the under wing-coverts these edgings are very slight and inconspicuous.

[To be continued.]

XLV.—*On the Occurrence of Ninox borneensis in Java, and of a large Form of Scops lempiji in Sumatra.* By J. H. GURNEY.

THE Norwich Museum has lately obtained from Mr. Whitely, of Woolwich, a *Ninox* which, Mr. Whitely informs me, he “received direct, in a large collection, from Java;” but he is unable to say in what part of that island it was obtained. The bird appears to me to be referable to the subspecies *Ninox borneensis*, and agrees closely in coloration with a specimen from Labuan in the Norwich Museum. It has five dark bars on the tail, and the following are its principal measurements:—wing 7·8 inches, tail 4·2, tarsus 1. As I am not aware that this Owl has hitherto been recorded from Java, I think it may be well to note the occurrence of the present specimen.